

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01316 281152Z  
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INR-07 SS-15 CIAE-00 NSAE-00  
/039 W

-----290034Z 086231 /22

R 281012Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO CNO WASHDC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3577  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON  
USDAO BUCHAREST  
USDAO SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1316

E.O. 11652: GDS 31 DEC 83  
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, US, US  
SUBJECT: PORT VISIT EXCHANGE

REF: CNO 181539Z JAN 77 (NOTAL)

1. GENERAL. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED FAVORABLE RESULTS IN THE SOVIET UNION FROM THE MAY 1975 EXCHANGE OF SHIP VISITS. PRINCIPALLY, THESE RESULTS HAVE BEEN AN INCREASE IN NAVAL CONTACTS AND FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAVE BEEN PASSED AROUND THE SOVIET NAVY BY WORD OF MOUTH. ULTIMATELY, GIVING A GROUP OF SOVIET SAILORS A WINDOW INTO THE UNITED STATES MAKES A POLICY OF PERIODIC EXCHANGES WORTH PURSUING.

2. THE SOVIET NAVY VIEW. WE KNOW THAT THE SOVIET NAVY IS INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL SHIP VISIT EXCHANGES WITH THE U.S. NAVY. FAVORABLE COMMENT ON FUTURE EXCHANGES HAS BEEN MADE TO ALUSNA BY THE CHIEF OF THE MAIN NAVY STAFF, FADM SERGEYEV, AND BY THE SOVIET NAVY DEPUTY CINC, FADM SMIRNOV. IN PURSUIT OF ITS OWN GOALS, WE BELIEVE THE SOVIET NAVY WOULD LOBBY FOR APPROVAL OF THE EXCHANGE OF VISITS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01316 281152Z

3. TIMING AND APPROACH. AT THIS TIME WE THINK IT IS TOO EARLY TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL FOR AN EXCHANGE OF SHIP VISITS TO THE SOVIETS. WE WOULD PREFER TO DEFER THE PROPOSAL FOR A FEW MONTHS UNTIL THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT US-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE DEVELOPING FAVORABLY IN A NUMBER OF OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE AT PRESENT TWO MILITARY-TO-MILITARY EXCHANGE PROPOSALS

(NWC VISIT AND EXCHANGE OF LECTURERS) IN THE HANDS OF THE SOVIET MOD. WE THINK IT ADVISABLE TO AWAIT THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THESE PROPOSALS BEFORE ADDING A THIRD. THE TIMING OF THE VISIT WOULD APPEAR TO OFFER US THE OPTION OF AWAITING DEVELOPMENTS. A SHIP VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD BE GEARED TO FAVORABLE SEASONAL WEATHER. FOR BOTH ODESSA AND LENINGRAD, THAT PERIOD IS 1 MAY THROUGH 30 SEPTEMBER. AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, WE BELIEVE THAT CHANCES FOR A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO A SHIP VISIT EXCHANGE PROPOSAL WOULD BE ENHANCED IF THE PROPOSAL WERE MADE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC RATHER THAN MILITARY CHANNELS, EITHER IN MOSCOW OR IN WASHINGTON.

4. WHICH SOVIET PORT? A. ODESSA. LAST YEAR, THERE WERE FOUR VISITS TO ODESSA IN RATHER QUICK SUCCESSION BY SHIPS OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN AND INDIAN NAVIES. CONSEQUENTLY, FOR THE TIME BEING, ODESSA IS A RATHER WORN OUT IDEA. FURTHERMORE, THE CITY HAS LITTLE TO INTEREST VISITING CREWS. HOWEVER, IN THE BLACK SEA AREA, THERE IS LITTLE CHOICE AND PERHAPS NO ALTERNATIVE TO ODESSA. A VISIT TO ODESSA WOULD APPARENTLY BE A COMPARATIVELY EASY REQUEST FOR THE SOVIETS TO APPROVE. B. LENINGRAD. TO MOST SOVIETS, LENINGRAD REMAINS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS CITY IN THE USSR. A REVISIT TO LENINGRAD DOES CALL ATTENTION TO THE LIMITED ATTRACTIONS OF MOST SOVIET PORTS. THIS REALIZATION COULD INHIBIT SOVIET APPROVAL. FURTHERMORE, LENINGRAD DOES NOT FIT A SCHEDULE COMBINING ROMANIAN AND BULGARIAN PORTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, LENINGRAD HAS A GREAT DEAL TO OFFER VISITING AMERICAN SAILORS.

5. RECOMMENDATION. CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR A POSSIBLE EXCHANGE SHOULD CONTINUE SO THAT WE MIGHT DECIDE TO PROCEED IN LATE MARCH OR IN APRIL. TOON

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01316 281152Z

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## Message Attributes

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